NETWORK APPLIANCE

Abstract of the Invention

A network appliance is described that can provide a variety of software services, including both platform services, such as access method services, and a load balancing service. A network may include a network appliance that both provides one or more platform services and acts as a load balancer. When two or more such appliances are used together, they can replace a substantial portion of a conventional network. For example, when a network appliance receives a client communication, its load balancer service can determine whether one of its own platform services will process the communication or forward the communication to another network appliance for processing. Moreover, if the load balancing service of a network appliance fails, another network appliance can provide load balancing. Similarly, if another service of a network appliance fails, then the network appliance may continue to provide load balancing but forward communications requiring the failed service to another network appliance for processing.